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SUBJECT: Dongzhou Protests Flare Up Again

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Just days after Guangdong Governor Huang Huahua
announced the closure of the December 2005 Dongzhou incident,
Western media reported renewed protests by Dongzhou area villagers.
Local government-hired thugs, backed by local police, fought with
villagers who continued to protest new land encroachments by coal
and wind power plants in the Honghaiwan (Red Sea Bay) Development
Zone as well as a lack of compensation for additional land use. END
SUMMARY.

Continued Land Encroachment Leads to Protests, Violence

12. (U) Despite Guangdong Governor Huang Huahua's announcement of
the closure of the December 2005 Dongzhou incident at a press
conference in Beijing on the edges of the meetings of the National
Peoples' Congress, Radio Free Asia and other western media reported
renewed protests by Dongzhou area villagers and violence against
them by government-hired thugs. Villagers continued earlier
protests against the taking of land and inadequate compensation. In
the latest series of incidents, local villagers marched this past
weekend to the power plants to request a meeting with management.
Villagers described their numbers as more than had been present
during the December 6, 2005 protests. Plant management refused to
meet the villagers but sent several dozen riot police instead.
Villagers peacefully disbanded after hanging banners by the gate
calling on the Party in Beijing to resolve the problem.

13. (U) On Sunday, March 11, villagers from Shigu, among them women
and elderly, began a sit-in to prevent workers from the coal-fired
power plant from running water pipes across village land, since no
compensation had been paid, nor had there been any communication
with villagers from plant management. Thugs, reportedly hired by
the local government and numbering more than 100, then attacked the
villagers with wooden sticks, injuring more than 20. Thugs then
surrounded the village to prevent them from obstructing power plant
workers from laying water pipes. Villagers from six area villages
totaling between 1000-2000 came to battle the thugs. After thugs
were injured, local officials arrived with police. Radio Free Asia
reported that enraged villages subsequently burned several vehicles
and equipment belonging to the contractors. With the destruction of

the equipment including backhoes, work was halted.
Inadequate Compensation/Unpunished Police Causes for Anger

14. (U) Local residents are angry about inadequate compensation and on-going efforts by the power plants to complete their construction as well as inaction by authorities to deal with police who killed villagers in December 2005. Villagers complained that the commanding officer and local officials had still not been held responsible for the deaths, which the authorities said were caused by police officers shooting after being attacked by a mob with homemade explosives.

15. (U) Villagers said they had thus far received only RMB 150 (USD 19) annually per person in compensation for land taken to develop the coal-fired and wind power plants in the Honghaiwan Development Zone. Some villagers would not accept the money when it was offered. Villagers also said that workers from the coal-fired station were continuing to encroach on their land with the installation of pylons to carry electricity away from the plant, and by the construction of pipelines for water intake.

16. (U) According to the villagers, since the shootings of December 2005, local officials had taken to appearing less in public, preferring to get gangs of thugs stationed outside the village to attack local residents on their behalf. One villager was quoted as saying that nothing had been resolved with officials and that the villagers now had to place a guard over the village at night to protect it from local thugs.

Comment:

A Problem Unresolved is a Problem that will Resurface

17. (SBU) Although Governor Huang Huahua announced the closure of the Dongzhou incident, it is clear that the villagers, who had been protesting regularly for months prior to the December 2005 shootings, do not consider the matter closed. Neither the power plant nor the local government has taken steps to resolve the case

GUANGZHOU 00000353 002 OF 002

by offering additional compensation; neither plant nor government officials contacted farmers before ordering the installation of pylons and pipelines on village land. When one considers that land use rights for some of the land on which the power plant is built were "purchased" for USD 19, it is understandable that villagers are still upset. The Dongzhou case is still open despite government attempts to close it.

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